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MY GODSON.

WHEN my cousin Mary married a solicitor, named Thomas Hardy, I went to stay at my uncle's house at Rochester a week before the wedding, and made the proposed new connection's acquaintance. The family were very busy getting Mary's kit together, and Hardy was sometimes in the way. On these occasions, I was deputed to take him in charge; and amuse him, and so we became intimate. Happiness opens a man's heart, as the sun, in the wittiest of fables, drew the traveller's coat off; and if he does not wax confidential on the eve of his marriage with a girl he loves, he *must* be an oyster. I easily discovered that my companion was dissatisfied with his position in the world. Home-bred and articleed early, he was more moral and higher principled than most men, but had never had an opportunity of finding his level, and so, perhaps, rather over-estimated his own powers, which were undoubtedly very fair. He was firmly convinced that if he had been sent to a public school and one of the universities, he would have been able to open a higher career for himself. A fellowship would have supported him while establishing himself at the bar; the bar led to the bench, or, still better, to parliament, to office perhaps. While the vein of the law, in which he was destined to work, led to pounds, shillings, and pence alone. It was in vain I urged, with perfect sincerity, that hard cash is the only thing in this world worth working for; that a man already possessing plenty of it, may set up other objects of ambition—prime ministry, small-bore shooting-cups, breeding a Derby winner, or what not—but that all such prizes were illusory; like foxes, grand to chase, but worthless when caught. He did not even attend to what sounded to him like sophistry, but proceeded to declare with energy, that if he ever had sons they should receive every advantage.

Well, he married; and in course of time sons were born unto him—four of them. All at once? O dear, no; they came at intervals, with a couple of daughters between. The third boy made his appearance in this incomprehensible planet nine

years after his eldest brother, and I was asked to stand as his godfather, a compliment I would readily have dispensed with. I hate to pledge myself to anything, or sign anything, even as a mere matter of form; I feel inclined to hang myself when square friends solicit my vote and interest to promote their insertion into round, but lucrative holes. My relatives—especially my female relatives—think me most ridiculously squeamish, and so I doubtless am; at least better and wiser men than myself do not seem to share my scruples. Now, if you have moral courage enough to walk up to a man's house, ring the bell, desire one of the children—whose sponsor you have been—to be fetched, and then and there cross-examine it, I have not. Moral courage is not my strong point; I had sooner do what I knew to be wrong, but what other people thought right, than reverse that process. So I durst not commit the rudeness of refusing to stand for this small Christian, any more than I durst make myself ridiculous afterwards by inquiring about its religious training. I accepted the office then, and went down to the christening, and being a childless man myself, rather cottoned to the little Johnny, who was named after me. But whether he ever learned what I undertook to see that he should learn in the vulgar tongue, I do not know. I suppose that direction was to ward against the Romish practice of teaching the Pater-noster in Latin; and now I think of it, Hardy was quite capable of preferring the dead language to the vulgate for the most elementary instruction, not on ecclesiastical grounds, but because he was never easy unless his male children were having school-lore crammed into their heads.

The two elder boys, fortunately for themselves and him, took kindly to their lessons, and being clever as well as industrious, shewed early signs of scholarship. Their mother, indeed, often sighed over their pale faces, their heavy lagging gait, their worn-looking eyes, their premature lack of animation, and would have liked to see them merry and playful, as their sisters were. But their health did not seem actually to suffer, and she too felt proud to hear that William, her first-born, was the

youngest boy in his form, yet nearly at the top of it, and that Alfred had carried off a prize for Latin verses.

But the precocity of the lads piled up a grievous burden for their brother to bear; every distinction either of them obtained became a precedent; no future boy could satisfy his father unless he equalled, or gain credit unless he surpassed it. I do not think that Hardy was an unreasonable man naturally, but his ambition for his sons' advancement was a passion which grew upon him yearly, and his disappointment when poor little Johnny failed to come up to his somewhat exacting standard was very bitter. Poor child, I liked him best of the lot; partly perhaps because I felt that if anything happened to his parents, it would devolve on me, as his godfather, to look a little more after him than the others; partly because he was more natural and childlike than his brothers had been; but principally, doubtless, for the reason which most commonly attracts us towards helpless things—namely, that *he took to me*. When I went to the house, it was a little fête for him; and, indeed, I visited my cousin much more frequently after Johnny's fourth or fifth birthday than I had ever done before. Poor little lad! he was bright enough when not at his lessons; had a vivid imagination, and a strong turn for mechanical contrivance; but the sight of a lesson-book seemed to paralyse his faculties. I tried occasionally to help him over some difficulty which was breaking his heart, and discovered how thoroughly uncongenial to his nature the grammar was. It was like teaching a hen to swim, an Italian to spar, a cat to fetch and carry.

Poor baby, he was put in that abominable *propria quæ maribus* mill before he ought to have known that there was any language but indifferent English spoken in the world; and I doubt if a week-day ever passed without his watering the pages with his tears.

'Uncle Remove,' said he one day. The children always called me so ever since I amused myself by mystifying one of them about our relationship, saying it was my cousin once removed. 'Uncle Remove,' said Johnny, after I had been telling him a story about a little girl who had fallen among gipsies, 'I wish a gipsy would steal me.'

'Indeed?'

'Yes. I should not mind wearing rags, and working hard, and living on dry bread and water, if only I had not got to do lessons.'

And yet that was the happiest period of his life, if he had but known it. His father was away at his office all day, and his mother protected him to a certain extent from the conscientious efforts of Miss Grounds, who was employed to introduce him to the Latin tongue, rescuing him from that ogress, and sending him out to play when she considered that he had been kept an undue number of hours at his task. He found out the difference when his school-life commenced, and he was drawn into the modern vortex of competition. I went to see him whenever I could, and never found him unharassed by one of these approaching trials. There were examinations for removes from a lower form to a higher, examinations for prizes, examinations for scholarships; for all of which he was forced to enter. What man having a race-horse that for several seasons had been carted about from meeting to meeting without picking up the

most trifling plate, would continue to keep him in training? Yet a like cruel perseverance was shewn by Hardy towards his son.

'He is the dunce of the family,' said the father. 'Look at his brothers. Why, even the youngest will catch him up soon if he does not take care. He is sluggish, and needs urging. Dear me, if I had only had his advantages!'

If the lad had only been idle and careless, I should have rejoiced; but he tried so hard, and fretted himself to death—that was the cruel part of it. It was not the fear of punishment that made him work; indeed, he did not get punished, for his master saw well enough that he was doing his best; but he was good-hearted, generous, high-couraged, and a word to him was worth more than a spur to another. His father told him to make an effort, and he made it: he had failed before, and might fail again, but he strained every nerve all the same.

It was heart-breaking to see. If he had sought his pleasure, and shirked, ten to one Hardy would have said: 'Idle dog; he could do the best of the lot of them if he liked,' and been rather proud of him in that belief; but his efforts proved his incapacity, and that provoked instead of conciliating the father, who could not stomach the idea of having begotten a dull child.

I deny, however, that Johnny was dull; there was plenty of work that he could do well, ay, and work that wants doing, too, if he had only been set to it. Pascal, when his father kept all mathematical books away from him, lest his mind should be diverted from the classical subjects into the study of which it was sought to force him, *invented* Euclid, rediscovered the problems out of his own head. Of course that was an extraordinary instance; no third mortal is likely to evolve the asses' bridge out of his inner consciousness; but in a minor way thousands of middle-class boys are placed in the position of the author of the *Provincial Letters*, and as their natural talents are not strong enough to force their way to the surface unassisted, they are wasted. Surely it is strange that tutors and governors, with all their experience, should be unable to discover the bent of boys' minds. Again, the most absurd conventionality multiplies the evil by a thousand; so very few methods of working for one's livelihood are 'gentlemanly.' We sneer at the caste of the Hindus and the cramped feet of the Chinese women, and we are quite as stupid ourselves; screwing born watchmakers into the pulpit, nailing excellent backwoodsmen to a lawyer's desk, making superior blacksmiths into very inferior doctors. When will men learn that happiness should be the one great object of their lives, and that it is best attained by spending their days in occupations which interest them. I honour these earls and marquises who have turned coachmen. If a man is born with a talent for driving, why, in the name of Weller, should he not utilise it? My over-driven godson suffered in health; his back became bent, his arms thin, his complexion sallow. His eyes seemed to grow larger, and the skin below them was often so dark that you might have thought he had been fighting; but unhappily, he could afford no time for pugilism, and his only antagonist was Fate, who kept on knocking him down in round after round; and though he came up again and again, when time was called, with

unflinching gameness, I could see that he was growing weaker and weaker with each succeeding effort.

As both his brothers had gone up to college with good scholarships, Johnny must at least have a small one; so, when the time came, he went in for an examination at Oxford, and failed; then he tried twice at Cambridge, and failed. So the idea of his earning the right of putting the first two letters of the alphabet after his name was given up, and Hardy, who had some little interest, succeeded in getting him a nomination for a good thing; but as there were many more nominations than vacancies, he had to undergo another course of cramming, terminated by another competitive examination, in which he was once more spun, losing this time by but very few marks.

The exasperated father asked him if there was anything he could do; if he had any taste at all. Johnny, brightening up, replied: Yes; he should like to go into the army. That was before the days of direct commissions for the Line, so it was settled that he should try for the Artillery, and he was at once sent to get another crammer to be prepared for one more contest.

His chance was now a better one, for this reason: Johnny took a long time to absorb knowledge, but when it once got into his constitution, it stuck there, so that all which he had mastered while reading for the other trials was now available to start with. He could not *cram*, but he could *learn*: he could not remember anything unless he understood it; but once make it clear to his mind, and it was his for ever. His present tutor saw this, and treated him accordingly, never hurrying him, utilising what he knew before, but at the same time working him fearfully. He began at six, and read till nine; then came breakfast; then work from ten till two; lunch and a rest; at it again from three till six; then a run. Dinner at seven; then reading again from half-past eight till ten, eleven, or twelve; as long as he was able to do any good, in fact. The examination was a harder one than any he had yet undergone; yet he passed in all the book-work, only, poor lad, to be plucked by the doctor.

He was a kind man, that surgeon; though an utter stranger, he took the trouble to write to Hardy, telling him that his son was not only unfit for the army, but his health was in a very precarious condition altogether, and he should have immediate advice. Hardy was alarmed, and followed this suggestion; and the result was, that Johnny was forbidden to look into a book except for amusement, and was sent to live with me in the country.

To live with me, did I say? It was too late for that. Hardy pooh-poohed the idea of over-work and want of healthy development having anything to do with this fatal result, and I do not suppose that any one had the cruelty to argue the matter with him. What was the use? The mischief was done now; the lad lingered listlessly for thirteen months, and then sank. I think he was glad to die; he was no good, he said, and it was better he should be out of an over-crowded world. Darwin's book on the *Origin of Species* came out just then, and I read him parts of it. The chapters on natural selection interested him keenly. 'The struggle for existence now is between ready memories,' said he with a smile; 'those who cannot

cram will have to die out, just as species who could not fight once had. It is all right.'

I was sitting by his side just before the end came.

'Uncle Remove,' he whispered, 'don't look so sorry: there are no competitive examinations in heaven.'

Those were the last words of my godson.

CECIL'S TRYST.

CHAPTER XXXII.—CECIL'S FAREWELL.

It might be thought that, after so strange an interview, in which nothing was cleared up as respected my unhappy cousin, and yet everything placed on a new footing, I should have repaired to his hotel at once. But the fact was, that I was fairly panic-stricken by Ruth's last words, which had a dread signification for me of which she did not dream. That neither she nor I was to see Cecil more, though I was to receive a communication from him by letter, could surely mean nothing else but that Good-bye which he had already meditated, and been on the very point of saying months ago, namely, his Farewell to Life itself. The letter had been written *then*, and, for all I knew, had not been destroyed; in that case, he would only have to leave it out upon his desk, as before, and complete the act which I had only delayed. If my apprehension was well grounded, my cousin was no longer among the living; and if he was dead, 'Let my eyes,' thought I with a shudder, 'be not the first to look upon him.' The excitement of the last few days must be my excuse for this moral cowardice. I felt completely unhinged; weary, and yet full of thoughts that denied me a moment's rest.

Utterly without confidence in myself, I drove rapidly home, determined to make Aunt Ben the judge of what was proper to be done, and deeply regretting that I had not taken refuge in her common-sense before; but on reaching home I found both my aunt and Nelly had gone out for a long day's shopping—in connection with the dear girl's *trousseau*, as I now remembered—and would only return in time for dinner. To apply my mind to writing or reading—far less to sit down unoccupied, and let my fancy take its wild weird way—was not to be thought of; moreover, I did not wish to be alone in the house when that letter should arrive, which, in all probability, was already on its way. I started, therefore, to walk, I cared not whither, so long as it was in the crowded streets, with all the noise and stir of life about me, to distract my thoughts. In this, however, they so little succeeded, that within the first five minutes I found myself opposite Cecil's hotel, and looking up at the window of his bedroom, and lo, it was as red as blood! It is a shameful confession to make, but for an instant I shuddered with horror; nor even when I reflected that the sinking sun was flaming against the pane, did I escape from the ideas to which the fright had given birth. To what ghastly sight, in yonder chamber, thought I, might not those rays be a witness!

Had I not seen him once with my own eyes, a staring dreadful figure, with neck half bare, and the shining weapon in his hand, about to cut the knot of the mystery of life; and now, perhaps, he had done it, and the heart that had once beat in

such unison with my own, was stifled for ever, and the gracious lips for ever dumb! What would I not have given to see him come to the window, or even to see another there, though it were but the unconcerned face of the inn servant! All seemed so lonely and desolate up there, and yet I did not dare to invade its solitude. I went home again with feverish haste, to ask if any letter had come for me, and finding none, then out again, this time for a long walk at speed, in the opposite direction. But I could not escape from the spectre I had raised in my own mind. In a by-street in Pimlico, a street hawker froze my blood by crying: '*Mysterious murder in a West End hotel—mysterious murder!*'—for might not Cecil's suicide be thought to be a murder, or the man have called it so, to make his broad-sheet the more saleable? It was, of course, impossible that the catastrophe I dreaded to hear of could, even if it had happened, be by this time in print; and yet I felt relieved when the fellow went on to roar out: '*All for love—his sweetheart having perished by drowning in the river Lea.*' As I passed the Corinthum, there was a grumbling crowd about its pit-door. 'If I'd a known she didn't hact to-night,' said one, 'I'd never have come;' and 'What's the play without 'er in it?' growled another. The complimentary comment upon my drama did not wound me; but the mention of Miss Brabant's absence recalled to me its cause with renewed alarms. How thankful was I, when I got home, to hear from the servant that 'the ladies had returned,' for a letter was lying on the hall table for me in Cecil's handwriting, and, if I had been alone, I felt that I should have lacked courage to open it. I took it up with a trembling hand, and carried it with me into the drawing-room, under pretence of getting more light to read it by; and even then I was glad to defer doing so, and affected to listen with interest to Aunt Ben's triumphant account of her good bargains.

'We have been very economical, but also highly successful—have we not, Nelly?' said she.

And Nelly corroborated her with becoming enthusiasm. Not till we had dined—for what was the use of spoiling their dinner, though, for my own part, I only made-believe to eat, and could scarcely swallow a mouthful—did I produce the letter; and after premising shortly what had happened at Laburnum Villa, proceed to read it.

'By the time you receive these lines, dear Fred,' it began, 'I shall have left London, never to return to it, nor to see any of you in this life again.'

Here I stopped, breathless, not with surprise, but with that sharp sense of relief that is akin to pain, and deeply thankful that matters were no worse.

My aunt, on the other hand, seemed turned into stone with astonishment. 'Good Heavens!' ejaculated she, 'what is the poor lad after now? He must have taken leave of his senses altogether.'

'How very, very sad this is,' said Nelly; the tears rose in her bright eyes; she was pitifully contrasting, as I guessed, her own exceeding happiness, with the wretchedness and desolation that poor Cecil's words bespoke.

'This is not a resolution of the moment, beloved cousin,' the letter went on to say, 'but one that I have had in my mind for long. I am unfit to be with you in my present state; whenever I enter your pleasant home circle, it is to damp its mirth, and chill its sunshine: and yet it is not for your sake

that I withdraw myself from it—irrevocably, inexorably—but for my own. To say that I shall be happier alone than in your company, would be a mockery, for I never am, nor can be happy; but I feel that it is better for me to be alone. You must be content with that excuse for my conduct, for I have no other. You may imagine that my motive for thus estranging myself lies, somewhere, in the interview which I have this day had with Ruth; but that is not so. I should have bidden you "good-bye" a little later, perhaps; but it would have come to pass all the same. I do not reproach you for not having told me about Ruth; she has taken all blame, if there be blame, on herself, and doubtless with justice, though the shock to which I have been subjected was, as you will understand, most terrible. If my last wishes are dear to you, you will forbear to interrogate Ruth upon this matter: her lips are sealed, except so far as to corroborate, if it be necessary, the fact that I have left my native land for ever. It is useless to search for me; and to know that you were doing so, would only be to add another grief to the heavy burden that I must carry to my grave. Enough of that sad subject—my wretched self. Let me now speak of your own affairs. The one bright gleam in my dark life, since I returned to England, has been, my beloved cousin, the success which has dawned at last upon your dramatic future: that it may grow and grow, and your fame with it, is my most earnest wish. If I could hope that it would do so in proportion to your deserts, there would be no necessity for what I am about to add; but though merit so often gains the reward it deserves upon the stage, the playwright himself does not always reap it.'

'That is not like Cecil,' observed Nelly thoughtfully.

'That is true,' said I, reperusing aloud the laboured passage; 'but, then, we must remember that Cecil is not like himself.'

'No, indeed,' said my aunt sighing. 'To think that he should have ever taken such delight in law and lawyers! I believe that Mr Clote did him a deal of harm by making him think so much of his money: depend upon it, that will now become the poor lad's hobby-horse; he will care for nothing else, and die a miser.'

'Hush!' said I softly. 'Do not judge him harshly. Here is something, Aunt Ben, which, at least, will clear him of that charge.' And I read out as follows:

'Dramatic success, however great, will at all events never bring you a fortune, and without, at least, good means, I am sure, dear Fred, you are not the man who ought to marry. I have distressed you once by speaking on this subject, but you must not misunderstand me now, as you did then; I had never any end in view beside your happiness; and—since your happiness is bound in hers—that of your Eleanor.'

'Now, that again is very unlike Cecil,' remarked my aunt: 'there is not a word of kindness for Nelly herself.'

'Nay, but this is like him,' said I—'just like his old Gatcombe self. Listen!'

'In order, therefore, to insure for you material prosperity, I have arranged certain matters with Mr Clote, with which I earnestly entreat your compliance. There was a time when there would have been no sense of obligation in either of us at receiving a favour at the other's hand: recall it now, dear Fred, and feel none in receiving one at mine. What use have I for money? Even if it could buy me friends,

it would be of no service, since I wish to live alone. I have reserved to myself what is amply sufficient for my needs. With the rest, if you oblige me by accepting it, I shall have purchased happiness—the happiness of making another happy, who is still dearer to me, Fred. (you may always be sure of that), than my own life. Mr Clote will call, and communicate to you the particulars. Do not, I beseech you, refuse the only proof of friendship—though it may seem a gross one—that it is now in my power to shew you. The same reason, or unreason, if you choose to call it so, that exiles me from you and England, makes me also averse to carry on any correspondence; your letters would only bring once more before my eyes long-banished joys, and wake again regretful memories. If you have, however, serious occasion to write to me, Ruth will always be in possession of my address.—Adieu, dear Fred., adieu for ever! May all happiness attend you, is the constant prayer of your affectionate Cecil.

For a full minute after I had finished this epistle, none of us spoke, so busy were we all with our own surmises or suspicions.

'The poor dear fellow is mad,' sighed I at last.

'If his head is amiss,' observed Aunt Ben thoughtfully, 'he shews, at least, that his heart is sound. I wonder what sort of arrangement he has made with Mr Clote in your favour?—A very handsome one, I'll be bound.'

'My dear aunt,' said I gravely, 'I trust you do not think me capable of taking advantage of it in any case?'

'And why on earth should you not, Fred.? Your poor cousin has obviously no use for all his money, while even a small slice of it would be of the greatest benefit to you and Eleanor. For my part, I think it does Cecil immense credit to have thought of making you such an offer at a time like this, instead of waiting, as most folks would be content to do, for the opportunity of presenting a silver fork and spoon. It is when a young couple are without experience in cutting and contriving, and just setting up for themselves, that they stand most in need of such help—not when they have settled down, and learned how to cut their coat according to their cloth. I think it a great proof of common-sense in Cecil.'

'And yet, my dear aunt,' urged I, unable to repress a smile at the queer logic which her love for her nephew and prospective niece had suggested to Aunt Ben, 'you have just admitted that Cousin Cecil's wrong in his head.'

'Well, well,' returned the old lady impatiently, 'he can't help that. We ought to be thankful that his madness has not driven him in the other direction, the same that was taken by old—'

I knew she was within a hairbreadth of saying 'old skinflint,' for she turned the same colour as her cap-strings, which were purple, as she corrected herself with: 'Taken by poor old Mr Bourne, you know—our dear Eleanor's grandfather. And this I will say, that, if you don't take the money, you are ten times madder than your cousin Cecil is or ever will be. Why, I suppose if he had given you a handsome marriage present, you would not have been too proud to accept that; and what is this but a marriage present, made a few weeks in advance.'

'That would be a very different matter, Aunt Ben,' said I; 'for, if I don't mistake, this letter of Cecil's conveys an offer of such a sum of money

as it is quite out of the question that I should accept. However, I have no doubt that we shall see Mr Clote to-morrow, and he will tell us all about it.'

'He won't accept it, my dear,' observed Aunt Ben to Eleanor, in a very loud 'aside.' 'I know poor dear Fred. so well. He is just like his father before him—quite mad about money matters. The Wrays all pique themselves upon not thinking much of money; upon not bowing down to the golden calf, as other people do; and yet they must think there is something very sacred about the animal too, or they would not make such a fuss about accepting a loin or a shoulder, as a present from a friend.'

'And yet you are a Wray yourself, Aunt Ben,' returned Eleanor, smiling; 'and, if I am not much mistaken, would be quite as unwilling as Fred., if you were placed in his position'—

'Stuff and nonsense!' interrupted the old lady angrily. 'I thought you were a more reasonable person. If your poor old grandfather could hear you taking up with such opinions, it would make him turn in his grave. You pretend to think with that foolish boy, just to please him; and if you do that now, when you are your own mistress—mark my words—when you are married to him, you will be his slave!'

While this sharp admonition was in progress, there had come a ring at the front-door bell; and at this moment, our handmaiden entered with an address-card. 'This gentleman wishes to see you, sir, upon important business.' On the card was printed, *Mr Clote, Gray's Inn.*

CHAPTER XXXIII.—ELEANOR'S SCISSORS.

I had seen Mr Clote years ago at Gatcombe, where he had come upon business, immediately after the arrival of my cousins from India, and he now looked pretty much the same as he had done then: a small, spare man, with a skin like parchment, and not a trace of hair upon it, he seemed to bid defiance to Time. We had got on very well together of old, though we had nothing in common; he was very frank, and had had the courage to confess his antipathy to a country life, his contempt for horses, and his disbelief in exercise and fresh air. They had never done him any good, he said (though I doubt if he had given them a fair chance), and he was always well in his chambers at Gray's Inn. As he was there for seven hours every week-day, for about fifty weeks in the year, it must be allowed that he had very good health—a fact which he mainly attributed to 'never putting anything that was not warm into his stomach.' But I don't think he enjoyed it. He enjoyed nothing, by his own confession (which I have no reason to disbelieve), except attending to business, and letting off little jokes, generally at his own expense. Literature, he was wont to say, was a dead letter to him. 'Deeds, not Words,' was his motto. With this facetious account of his opinions he was greatly pleased, and repeated it often: doubtless his clerks always laughed at it, and it was considered in their salaries; for he was a kindly and open-handed little fellow, though, to look at him, you could have scarcely called him flesh and blood.

'Glad to see you, Mr Fred.—Glad to see the

ladies: they need not leave us;' for both my aunt and Nelly were pruning their wings for flight to the drawing-room at the sight of Mr Clote, who had a reputation for condemning the fair sex as well as exercise and fresh air. 'My business is not of a private nature; indeed, it is not business at all, in a high sense, being an affair of sentiment. The ladies will doubtless understand it; I confess I don't. However, I have excellent news for you, Mr Fred.; though, perhaps, it is no news after all.' (His quick eye had fallen on my cousin's letter.) 'Mr Cecil has written, has he?'

'He has written,' said I, 'to offer me, as I understand, some portion of his property.'

'Some portion!' echoed the little lawyer. 'When you give your aunt a slice of plum-pudding, you don't call the pudding some portion, do you, but the slice. Well, Cecil has given away his pudding—thirty thousand pounds or so—and kept the slice—some five thousand pounds, little more than his sister's share—for himself.'

'Thirty thousand pounds!' cried I. 'That is incredible.'

'Mr Fred., here's the deed of gift.'

And Mr Clote produced a parchment covered with cabalistic signs and seals.

'Well, and what do you think of it all, Mr Clote?'

'Think of it? Why, that you are a deuced lucky fellow!'

'Yes. But what do you think of Cecil? He gave you his instructions personally, as I conclude. Do you not think him, to say the least of it, very eccentric?'

'Of course; but not more so than a man who lives in the open air and gives himself up to exercise is liable to become. At Gatcombe, he was always flying through space upon a leaping-pole, like a witch on a broomstick; in South America, he rode wild horses, as I understand; in Switzerland, he climbed the mountains before sunrise—this is what comes of it all. But he is perfectly sane in the eye of the law, if you mean that. Moreover—I am sure this was in reply to some expression of opinion conveyed by my aunt's face, though I did not catch it—the money would be sure to come to you or yours sooner or later, if your cousin does not marry, as he protests he never will. He is a very sensible young fellow so far—begging your pardon, Miss Bourne. I meant, that since there are certainly not two Miss Bournes in the world, he was a sensible young fellow. Oh, there's not the slightest reason why you should not take the money.'

'You must permit me to be the judge of that, Mr Clote,' said I coldly.

'I think there is one other person who ought to be consulted, Fred.,' observed my aunt with significance. 'You should remember, dear, that your future wife would have been an heiress—I don't say but for your fault, yet certainly but for you. It should surely be a question whether you should deprive her a second time, from a morbid sense of independence, of competence and position.'

'It is a question,' said I, 'which she shall answer for herself.—This deed, as I understand, Mr Clote, puts me in possession of the sum you have mentioned?'

'Just so,' said he: 'you can read it for yourself.'

I took the parchment and placed it in Nelly's hand. 'If you think it right to keep it,' said I,

'we will do so, dear Nelly; you are quite free to choose.'

'Good Heavens!' cried the little lawyer, jumping out of his chair; 'if it had been *ad valorem*, there would have been a matter of a hundred pounds gone, in stamps alone!'

For Eleanor had snatched up her scissors and cut the precious document right across!

I had already cause to know that she was possessed of spirit and independence, but I had never admired my darling more than at the moment when I saw her with half that parchment in each of her hands.

'She has been accustomed to be a great deal in the open air herself,' observed my aunt quietly, in answer to Mr Clote's look of astonishment and alarm; and it was the only occasion on which I ever knew Aunt Ben to indulge in a touch of satire.

'It does not matter to me, of course,' said the lawyer ruefully; 'but you understand that all Mr Cecil has done is now labour in vain.'

'We quite understand that,' said I; 'and also that it was a labour of love. Pray, tell him that we thank him with all our hearts. He has forbidden me to write to him, but I must send him a few lines upon such a matter as this.'

I was by this time in the hall with Mr Clote, who, I fancied, was not sorry to escape from the company of a young lady of such a very resolute character as Eleanor had proved herself to be. In this, however, I did him wrong.

'My dear sir,' said he confidentially, 'I couldn't tell you so before the ladies, but the fact is, I can tell Mr Cecil nothing, for the simple reason that I don't know where he is. If I wish to have any communication with him in future it is to be carried on through an opera-dancer. Yes, sir. Did you ever hear of such an unprofessional proceeding in your life?'

'An opera-dancer?' said I. 'Do you mean Miss Brabant the actress?'

'Well, I believe that is the young lady's name. There is not much difference (as I have been given to understand) between actresses and opera-dancers. She lives at Laburnum something, in St John's Wood. Upon my life, sir—and here he mopped his forehead—'I feel as if I was being struck off the rolls.'

I was not so shocked as Mr Clote, but I was almost equally surprised, for singular as it was that, after what had passed between them (which was surely something of no pleasant kind), Cecil should have appointed Ruth to be the medium of correspondence between myself and him, it was yet more strange that he should have done the same in the case of his lawyer.

A new key to the mystery of Cecil's conduct now presented itself to my mind. Perhaps Mr Clote was right in his conclusion, though he had arrived at it so easily. It was possible that my cousin was keeping his resolution with respect to Ruth in the letter, but not in the spirit. He would not marry her, but he had found it impossible to live without her. A proposal of that kind might easily have produced the indignation and chagrin which I had beheld in Ruth, but she might have accepted it, nevertheless. It was by no means out of character with Cecil's old self that he should make atonement for such a course of conduct in the Quixotic offer that he had made to

myself. It would be impossible, under such circumstances, that he could continue to visit us, and hence his letter of final farewell.

On the other hand, there was Ruth's solemn statement, that they two were never to meet again, which certainly at the time impressed me with its truth. Moreover, I had my doubts whether my cousin, with five thousand pounds, would have been welcome to the brilliant Miss Brabant, however acceptable he might have been with seven times that sum. And again, she must have been fully aware of his intention of making over his fortune, and have approved of it, since she had told me to expect a letter from him with a request, to which, 'however strange,' she had besought me to accede.

Bewildered with these conflicting views, I determined, as far as possible, to resolve the question for myself; and, late as it was, I took a cab, and drove to Cecil's hotel. 'Mr Wray had departed, with all his luggage, at two o'clock that day,' was the reply to my inquiries; 'and had left no address.'

I then drove to Laburnum Villa. The house was dark but for a single candle in an upper window. I rang the bell—first softly, then loudly, then with a peal fit to wake the dead. The little household, as I knew, kept very late hours; and I felt confident that the neglect of my summons was intentional. If it was, I should have had no right to complain; for after all, I was not 'my cousin's keeper.' But I did not think of propriety until I heard Fantine's step descending the stairs. Then I trembled a little, remembering the sharpness of her tongue; and, taking out half a sovereign, held it between my finger and thumb for a sop to Cerberus. It was not, however, Fantine at all, but a blear-eyed old woman, such as that comely damsel might have become some fifty years hence.

'Is Miss Brabant at home?' said I, taken greatly aback by this spectacle.

'No, she ain't,' said the old lady with a defiant air. 'It's a pretty time for calling, this is; bringing honest people out of their beds. What do ye mean by it?'

I felt so terribly in the wrong, that I hastened to offer this good woman the coin which I had intended for Fantine.

'It's a farthing,' said she sharply; then, having tested the gold between her toothless gums, she added: 'No, it ain't,' and scrutinised me admiringly by the light of the candle.

'I want to know how Miss Brabant is: she was very unwell this morning.'

'She's as right as right,' replied the old lady cheerfully: 'gone into the country for a little change—that's all.'

'Alone?' inquired I as carelessly as I could.

'Yes, yes,' answered the ancient dame assuringly. 'Besides, a handsome young gentleman like you ought to have no call to be jealous.'

The leer with which she favoured me was full of significance. I daresay, from Fantine's eyes, it would have been that 'roguish glance,' which is asserted to be so attractive; and indeed there was roguery still in this and plenty of it.

'Any name?' said she.

I hesitated in doubt whether to leave my name or not. 'No,' said I: 'never mind;' and I turned upon my heel. 'Good-night.'

'He's tight,' muttered the old woman like an echo. 'He's forgot his own name;' and I think she was surprised to see me make such a straight course to the cab.

My expedition had been barren in results; but there was something in this last interview with that old hag which seemed to give me the conviction that I should henceforth be a stranger not only to Cecil but to Miss Brabant. It was my belief that they had gone off together.

I had never repented for a single moment of Nelly's act of decision with regard to the deed of gift; but I now approved of it more than ever. To accept money, even from a friend's hand, was, as Aunt Ben had said, distasteful to me, as it had been to all my race; but what would have weighed still more with me in rejecting Cecil's offer (even if it had been less unreasonably large) was the fact, that it had been made, as it seemed to me, with a studious avoidance of Nelly's name—nay, with a sort of repudiation of her. Not a wish had been expressed for *her* happiness; not a single message of good-will towards her was to be found throughout that letter of farewell; and though the same might be said with respect to Aunt Ben, I felt the neglect of my darling, of course, more keenly, and resented it with an indignation that my cousin's generosity towards myself inflamed rather than assuaged. And *now*, so far from accepting a fortune at Cecil's hands, I should have hesitated not a little at receiving a marriage present.

HERBS AND SIGNATURES.

EVERY wife of a country parson or squire, until the close of the last century, was, what Miss Becker, Miss Faithful, and the advocates of Woman's Rights insist on ladies now being, a medical practitioner. They were not M.D.s, neither did they affect a knowledge of osteology, nor strive to gain access to the dissecting-room, but they were skilled in the *materia medica* of their age; and a Lady Bountiful of the sixteenth or seventeenth century not only prescribed, but also compounded, and frequently manufactured her medicines, discharging herself the duties now divided between physician, apothecary, and wholesale druggist.

Allusions to this function of country dames abound in old tales and dramas; and it must have been a pleasant sight to a loving if hen-pecked Vicar of Wakefield to behold his spouse, with her daughters, inquiring into the ailments of her poor neighbours, and ministering to their necessities out of her ample store of cordials, which, if they did not much good, assuredly did little harm; and it would be well if as much could be said for some celebrated recipes now-a-days. Strychnine, prussic acid, and arsenic did not figure in her Pharmacopoeia. Her garden was the storehouse of her medicines. A garden of the time of the Tudors and Stuarts, and yet later, was not considered complete unless it contained a number of herbs for the preparation of simples. Tusser gives us full information as to its usual contents: forty-two herbs for the kitchen, fourteen for salads, eleven to boil or butter, a number for windows and pots, seventeen to still in summer, and 'twenty-five necessary herbs to grow in the garden for physic, not rehearsed before:' a goodly stock, and quite sufficient as well to occupy the leisure time of the ladies, as to excite the admiration of the bumpkins

of the locality, for whose benefit, in common with the squire's family, it was intended.

Good housewifely physic was among the 'points of housewifery united to the comfort of husbandry,' as saith Tusser :

Good housewife provides, ere sickness be come,
Of sundry good things in her house to have some :
Good aqua composita and vinegar tart ;
Rose-water and treacle to comfort the heart ;
Cold herbs in her garden for agues that burn,
That over-strong heat to good temper may turn ;
White endive and succory with spinage enow ;
All such with good pot-herbs should follow the
plough ;
Get water of fumitory liver to cool,
And others the like, or else go like a fool ;
Conserves of barberry, quinces, and such ;
With syrups that caeseth the sickly so much.

Great was the fame of the dame that was an adept in the mysteries of stilling ; wide and well merited was her popularity ; she was an ever welcome guest at the manor-houses around ; and from distant parishes, many of the sickly came to partake of her renowned cordial waters.

The knowledge of stilling is one pretty feat,
The waters be wholesome, the charges not great.

The *savants* of the day, moreover, did not sneer at the simples of the good housewife ; on the contrary, they themselves had great faith in herbs, and the most learned of them wrote books on 'herbarism,' taught by the perusal of which, ladies might, from their 'own fields and gardens, best agreeing with English bodies, on emergent and sudden occasions, furnish themselves with cheap, easy, and wholesome cures for any part of the body' that might be 'ill affected.'

Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, bears witness to the medical skill of country gentlewomen : 'laurel and asarabacca every gentlewoman in the country knows how to give.' There was some doubt as to whether white hellebore was a safe physic, but 'Heurnius and Christophorus a Vega think it may be lawfully given, and our country gentlewomen find by their common practice that there is no great danger in it.'

The herbarism on which the country gentlewoman's pharmacy was founded was long in high repute. Soame tells us (1734) that the Society of Apothecaries used every spring to visit Hampstead to 'herborize.' Like the Society of Archaeologists, they made the interests of science a pretence, under cover of which they could take a little tour and disport themselves at picnics without diminishing their reputation for gravity. Few professional herbarists are met with at present, but the writer knows a worthy old man who yet, in an old quarter of Dublin, writes 'Herbarist' boldly over his door, exhibits choice dried weeds in his window, and has a few customers. There is scarcely a village in the backwood parts of Ulster and Connaught in which there is not some old female who spends her time gathering, drying, and decocting herbs, with which she avers, to a credulous peasantry, she can cure any or every disease.

The simples of the kitchen garden are now despised, but in their time they were probably the safest and most effectual medicines known in England. Elder-wine was much preferable to a well-known remedy, water procured by distillation from a peck of garden shell snails and a quart of worms,

with a few other things. For bones out of joint, sugar-cane was as beneficial as oil of swallows, which Southey tells us as late as the eighteenth century, was procured by pounding twenty alive swallows in a mortar. Better drink mug-wort or dandelion water than blood taken from a 'strong young man well nourished,' which was a new invention in the time of Elizabeth. Can we wonder at the specifics of a plain country dame, when we learn that the celebrated Richard Baxter, hearing of the admirable effects resulting from the swallowing of a gold bullet in a case similar to his own, took a gold bullet of more than 'twenty shillings weight.' 'Having taken it, I knew not how to be delivered of it. I took clysters for about three weeks, but nothing stirred it . . . but at last my neighbours set apart a day to fast and pray for me, and I was freed from my danger at the beginning of that day.' We marvel at a learned orthodox rector submitting patiently to his wife's doctoring, but she treated him on as intelligent principles as John Wesley would have done, whose *Primitive Physic* (which had a very extensive circulation, and is believed in yet by some Methodists of the old school) not only abounds in prescriptions of herb decoctions, but in one case enacts that quicksilver is to be taken by the ounce till the desired effect be produced. Herbs were the principal ingredients in the celebrated remedies of Dr Stephens and Dr Gilbert. The panacea of the former was so beneficial to an Archbishop of Canterbury that we are assured he 'lived till he was not able to drink out of cups, but sucked his drink through a hollow piece of silver ;' while two spoonfuls of that of the latter would enable one 'to walk safely in time of plague without fear, with the help of God.'

Herbs, woods, and springs, the power that in you lies,

If mortal men could know your properties !

Country ladies, of course, were willing to take the virtues of herbs for granted ; but wise men were not satisfied merely with the lessons learned by experience, and sought out some deep and recondite explanation of how it came to pass that certain herbs were good for the cure of certain diseases. They found the desired explanation in the doctrine of *signatures*. A signature was a mark or visible trait of a plant, whereby its adaptability to the cure of any diseased part of the body might be recognised. Herbarists formed their opinion of the utility of any plant from its form and colour, rather than from any analysis of its chemical properties. This doctrine of signatures pervaded the medical works of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Crollius wrote a very ingenious work on signatures. Langham accepted the doctrine in his *Garden of Health*, published in 1578 ; and that 'learned and excellent herbarist,' Mr Cole, founded his *Adam in Eden, or the Paradise of Plants*, altogether on signatures.

This quaint and elaborate work appeared in 1657 ; and not many years afterwards, Butler, in his *Hudibras*, ridiculed the whole medical art, signatures included :

And seek out plants and signatures,
To quack of universal cures.

The walnut is a good example of this fanciful but once practically important idea. 'Walnuts have a perfect signature of the head, the outer

husk or green covering representing the pericranium or outer skin of the skull; therefore, salt made of these husks is exceeding good for wounds in the head. The inner woody shell hath the signature of the skull; and the little yellow skin or peel that of the dura or pia mater, which are the thin scarfs that envelop the brain. The kernel hath the very figure of the brain; and therefore it is very profitable for the brain, and resists poisons.

Lilies of the valley were known by signature to cure apoplexy, 'for as that disease is caused by the dropping of humours into the principal ventricles of the brain, so the flowers of this lily hanging on the plant are of wonderful use therein. The pith of the elder being pressed with one's fingers, doth pit and receive the impress of them thereon, as the legs and feet of dropsical persons do; therefore, the juice of elders is profitable for dropsy.' Our Lady's Thistle has many prickles; hence it may be advantageously used in stitches of the side. Rhubarb, by signature, was the 'life, soul, heart, and treacle of the liver.' Crollius says that the woody scales of which the cones of the pine tree are composed resemble the fore-teeth; hence, pine-leaves boiled in vinegar make a gargle which relieves toothache. Sage

Helps the nerves; and by its powerful might, Palsies and feavers sharp it puts to flight.

Some herbs were distinguished by red streaks through their leaves: such were beneficial to any one troubled with bloodshot eyes. In fact, a large number of plants were connected by signature with the eyes especially:

Fœniculus, Verbena, Rosa, Chelidonia, Ruta,
Ex his fit aqua que lumina reddit acuta:

Fennel, Rose, Rue, Celandine, Verbene—

From these a lotion comes which renders eyesight keen.

Elecampane 'helpeth shortness of wind, openeth the opulations of the liver and spleen, and comforteth the stomach, as saith schola Salerni Enula campana reddit præcordia sana.' We recommend a decoction of the sliced roots of borage to the consideration of husbands who are troubled with shrewish wives, on no less authority than Arnoldus Villovanus. 'My conscience bears me witness that I do not lie. I saw a grave matron helped by this means; she was so cholerick and so furious sometimes that she was almost mad, and did she knew not what—scolded, beat her maids, and was almost ready to be bound, till she drank of this borage wine, by which excellent remedy she was cured.'

White coral was very like teeth; therefore, it helped children to 'breed their teeth, their gums being rubbed therewith;' and therefore it ought to be fastened to the ends of their rings. On the other hand, red coral is very like in colour to blood: this proves that it should stop bleeding from the nose or mouth, which, in sooth, it does, if held in the hands of those who thus bleed.

The leaves of the wood-sorrel protect the heart from many diseases, because they are 'broad at the ends, cut in the middle, and sharp towards the stalk.' All capillary plants were useful for diseases of the hair, and probably more beneficial than a depilatory made by drowning in a pint of wine as many green frogs as it would cover, setting the pot forty days in the sun, and then straining it for

use. Most yellow flowers were remedies for yellow jaundice.

It were easy to give many other instances of the wide-spread influence of the doctrine of signatures upon the use of herbs, but the above will suffice. The progress of medical science has exploded the notion that plants will cure diseases because they resemble the parts affected. The occupation of the herbarist is gone; and the medical chest of some apothecaries' hall has supplanted the physic garden of the country gentlewoman. An herb, however, is yet in general use which occupied several pages of Cole's *Paradise of Plants*, and which Burton considered potent for good or evil—tobacco, 'divine, rare, super-excellent, which goes far beyond all their panaceas, potable gold, and philosophers' stones—a sovereign remedy to all diseases. A virtuous herb, I confess, if it be well qualified, opportunely taken, and medicinally used; but as it is commonly abused by most men, which take it as tinkers take ale, 'tis a plague, a mischief, a violent purger of goods, lands, health; hellish, devilish, and damned tobacco, the ruin and overthrow of body and soul.'

THE GREAT CHANCERY SUIT OF GOTOBED v. BLITHERS.

IN SIX CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER V.

ARMED with a knowledge of those facts of which the reader is already cognizant, and entirely unaffected by the thought of the mighty consequences to the Gotobed family, the village of Rising-cum-Lark, and the peace of Miss Anastasia Tomkins, if they should fail, Messrs Moon and Son now commenced operations. In the first place, they wrote a polite letter to Mr Blithers, requiring him to cease working his manufactory of cacosmia. Receiving no answer whatever from Mr Blithers, they then wrote six letters in succession stating their surprise at not hearing from him. At length they were favoured with a short missive, wherein Mr Blithers expressed himself with much suavity, but manifest insincerity. Mr Blithers' letter was as follows:

PATENT CACOSMIA WORKS August 18—.

GENTLEMEN—I was much concerned receiving of your esteemed letters respecting that smell which I can't understand it at all for how can their be a bad smell when their is nothing to raise it and a gent I honour and regard like Mr Gotobed that to offend him has hurt my feelings so much you can't think since receiving of your esteemed letters have had no relish for my food which is a pity my solicitors are Messrs Tangle and Twist of Manchester and I hope to hear nothing more of this business which would be a bad job for all parties and knowing that your business lies a good deal with country gents perhaps a five per cent. commission on sales of the cacosmia effected through you might be a object which with advice to Mr Ephraim Moon to try light drinks this weather I am, &c.

NATHANIEL BLITHERS.

Baffled in their attempt on Mr Blithers, Messrs Moon and Son next entered into correspondence with Messrs Tangle and Twist. Now, Messrs Tangle and Twist had not the slightest objection to correspond to any extent—with a view of swelling Mr Blithers' bill of costs—and accordingly wrote as many letters

as would fill a moderately sized waste-paper basket. These letters were beautifully worded, and written in a fine clerical hand, and the only fault that could be found with them was that they contained no other information or meaning than that Messrs Tangle and Twist declined to commit themselves or their client to anything whatsoever. At length, when Messrs Tangle and Twist had written eighty-six letters, all of which were models of evasiveness, a kind of a faint idea seemed to dawn upon Messrs Moon and Son that they could get no satisfaction out of mere letter-writing. And, though they warmly sympathised with their opponents' epistolary propensities, as they were professionally bound to do, nevertheless, in obedience to Mr Gotobed's remonstrances, they made a great merit of dropping the correspondence; and Mr Maze, the eminent equity draftsman, received instructions to draw a Bill of Complaint in Chancery against Nathaniel Blithers.

And now Rising-cum-Lark shook off all apathy, all despondency, all cowardice, and thankfully resigned itself to combustion. The military gentleman with one arm paraded the street in a fever of ferocity. Mr Barry O'Looney was continually observed to tap himself on the chest with his shillelagh, as much as to say: 'There's a slumbering fire here—beware.' And the sample boy stood on his head oftener than was quite consistent with his well-known character for sobriety of demeanour. He who had known Rising-cum-Lark in the days of its calm, would scarce have recognised the place in the fury of its storm. Indeed, to the thoughtful and poetical mind, the village resembled nothing so much as that savage potentate who lived a life of abstraction and reverie in his native wilds, till, having received from Europe the present of a box of seidlitz powders, he drank the contents (under the advice of the court physicians) in two halves; and thereafter lost the majesty of tranquillity, and became a walking volcano.

We must not forget, in describing the turmoil into which this once quiet spot was plunged, to mention that the insidious Blithers had by this time succeeded in gaining a considerable party on his side. If the farmers suffered by the manufacture of cacoshmia, the labouring people, whose children were employed at the works, had never been so prosperous. The shopkeepers openly threw off their allegiance, and avowed themselves partisans of Blithers and large profits. The doctor himself, whose practice had been much increased by the vile odour of the cacoshmia, was suspected of tampering with the enemy; but when such insinuations were made, he cleared his throat with manly decision, and no further hints found belief. Only the landlord of the *Pig's Head* was strictly neutral, and trifled with his conscience by scratching his ear.

Between the faction of Blithers and the stanch friends of the old family, a terrible war of words arose. The one party asserted that 'the air of heaven was free; the other party retorted that when impregnated with the cacoshmia it was a good deal 'too free for them.' The Blitherites said that 'Englishmen wouldn't be trod down by no great families;' and the Gotobedites responded with much feeling that 'Englishmen wouldn't be pisoned by no bad smells.' Both sides made a great deal of what Englishmen or Britons would or would not do; justly considering it beside the question to inquire into the course likely to be adopted by Frenchmen or Germans in similar circumstances.

Nor was the warfare confined to words; for on one unlucky night Mr Barry O'Looney and Mr Samuel Bubb met at the *Pig's Head*; and, the one armed with his ancestral shillelagh, and the other with a pewter pot, they became reckless; and Mr Barry O'Looney went home that night with a black eye, a heart filled with triumph, and a quart of mild porter diffused over his garments.

Besides these desultory engagements, both parties mustered their whole forces in meetings held at the village school-room and on the village green. At the former, the rector took the chair, and exhorted all present to stick fast to one another; whereupon several young men in the excitement of the moment put their arms round the waists of young women. But the speech of the evening was made by Mr Gotobed himself. Now, Mr Gotobed had never been celebrated for eloquence. At election-times, when his position in the county compelled him to address public meetings, he had always contented himself with few words, and those few of a wandering kind. But on this occasion he came out as an orator of the first order. His brief historical sketch of the noble conduct of his ancestors was so valuable, that the schoolmaster took notes of his remarks. His picture of the former peace of Rising-cum-Lark was so pathetic, that Miss Anastasia and the sample boy shed tears. And when he described 'the tide of the thin end of the wedge,' his language, though more than usually confused in metaphor, was so thrilling, that his audience groaned aloud. 'The tide of the thin end of the wedge,' said Mr Gotobed, 'is rapidly advancing on us, and threatening every moment to burst into a fire, which will crush our beloved village beneath its foot.' When Mr Gotobed had finished his speech amid frantic applause, the assembly, wrought to wild enthusiasm, sang in chorus a version of *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*, which had been adapted to the occasion by the rector, who had a pretty poetic talent. The first two stanzas ran as follows:

Men of Rising, are ye dead?

Men who honour Gotobed;

Welcome to the conflict dread,

Mid your native dells!

Now 's the day, and now 's the hour;

See the front of battle lour;

See approach proud Blithers' power—

Blithers' odious smells!

At the meeting on the green, Mr Blithers called on all his friends to stand firm. Those of his audience who were sober did so; while a strong minority who were drunk made up for their deficiency in firmness by assuming a haughty demeanour.

But in those unhappy times perhaps the most deadly animosity was aroused by the fact, that the nearest way from the village to Mr Blithers' works lay across a corner of Gotobed Park, and Mr Blithers' hands insisted on taking the short-cut. The gates were locked; the fences were repaired; boards threatening prosecution were nailed up everywhere; the game-keepers and the wolf-hounds were on duty all day; and still the hands trespassed. Collisions between the trespassers and the watchers became matters of daily occurrence. A terrible giant who acted as stoker to the works, and who was known to his friends as 'Hairy Abraham,' transformed the head-keeper into a mere lay-figure for the exhibition of brown paper soaked in vinegar;

and the conqueror, in his turn, was neatly polished off by a dapper little groom in Mr Gotobed's service, and compelled to fall back on the support of some very ordinary adjectives. Nor were the wolf-hounds wanting in their exertions. The more ferocious, who were purposely kept short of food, lived principally on the fragments of trousers; and even the dog who was mildest in character made his kennel a museum of coat-tails.

While all this was going on at Rising-cum-Lark, Mr Maze, in the quietude of Lincoln's Inn, like a legal Clotho spinning the thread of fate, and unmoved by mortal passions, was preparing a bill in Chancery against Mr Blithers. By this bill, Mr Gotobed prayed that Mr Blithers might be restrained by the injunction of that honourable court from proceeding any further with his manufacture of cacoshmia, and also that an account might be taken of the amount of damages already sustained, and that Mr Blithers might be decreed to pay such amount, together with the costs of the suit. When the bill, prepared by Mr Maze, had been duly filed, it then became necessary to serve a copy on Mr Blithers personally, and one of Messrs Moon and Son's clerks was detailed for the duty. This ill-fated man found the defendant at his works, smoking a cigar, and superintending with much enjoyment the infusion of some villainous liquid. But when Mr Blithers learned the errand of the clerk, he grew suddenly pale with rage. He threw away his cigar, and pressed his hat firmly over his brows; and then, without speaking a word, he took a short run, like the captain of a side leading off at a foot-ball match, and let fly a kick so vigorous and so well timed, that the unfortunate emissary found himself up to the neck in a vat of lukewarm cacoshmia, and returned to his employers—to use Mr Samuel Bubb's expression—'with a very middlin' smell attendin' 'im.'

The result of this indiscretion on the part of Mr Blithers was that a motion was made to commit him for contempt of court. He had no defence, and was only saved from very unpleasant consequences by making an abject apology, and paying all the costs of the motion. This preliminary success was universally considered in Rising-cum-Lark as heralding a final victory. Miss Anastasia Tomkins in a delirium of joy treated each of her pupils to half a glass of Marsala; and the sample boy borrowed twopence from a friend, and perfumed the school with a bouquet of peppermint drops.

And now it became necessary for Messrs Moon and Son, and Messrs Tangle and Twist, to collect evidence in support of their respective clients. Accordingly the managing clerks of both firms spent much time in Rising-cum-Lark, and the principals themselves came to see some of the more important witnesses. Now, to give evidence was exactly suited to the temper of Rising-cum-Lark; this was what the village had been burning to do for some time past. Every tongue, regardless of the Catechism, had for some months been engaged in evil-speaking, and not a few tongues were ready, if necessary, to proceed to lying and slandering. The point at issue was, whether the smoke and effluvia from the works constituted a nuisance; and for the solution of this question the party of Blithers were possessed of perjuring noses that could smell nothing, while the more refined allies of Mr Gotobed were all prepared, in the sacred cause of truth, to be sick at a

moment's notice. Such a mass of testimony was offered to the lawyers' clerks, that their only difficulty was how to choose.

A few instances will suffice to shew the difficulty of selection, where every person who had arrived at years of discretion longed for the distinction of being 'took down.' Farmer Jones wished to swear that, coming from Braddleston market, and driving a 'sweet young think risin' fifteen an' a 'arf,' he was so blinded by the smoke and poisoned by the horrible odours, that he drove over a heap of stones, and ruined the knees of the 'sweet young think;' and that his source of information for that his affidavit was a milestone which came in contact with his head. Mr Splint, the veterinary surgeon, offered to swear that he was with Mr Jones on the occasion mentioned, and that there was no smoke at all, but that Mr Jones was very drunk. On hearing this, Farmer Jones begged to swear—and did very profanely—that 'Splint was drunkest,' Miss Janet Parkins, whose reputation was dearer to her than life, rushed out of her house, and seizing Moon and Son's clerk, took him into her parlour, locked the door, and set pens, ink, paper, and a glass of warm elder-wine before him. The bewildered man was then required to take down a statement that she had been kissed by Mr Samuel Bubb in a dark lane leading to the works. But as Miss Parkins' greatest beauty lay in a cork-leg, and—as Mr Barry O'Looney observed—'she had only one eye, and *that* squinted,' her statement was disbelieved, except she could prove that the night was pitch dark. Mr Barry O'Looney himself, if permitted, would have stated that he was at death's door in consequence of the cacoshmia, and would fight any one for twenty pounds a side who said he was not.

Abel Sidebotham, poacher and first bad character in waiting to the village, offered to swear 'anythink' for twopence-halfpenny. Peter Hodge, farmer, on the other hand, declined to sign any paper whatever, alleging as his reason that he had known much harm come out of a man's signing his name, and never any good; and that his father, being on his death-bed, had said: 'Peter, lad, never sign thy name to nowt.'

Miss Anastasia Tomkins had prepared on paper a rough draft of what she wished to swear, which, till cruelly altered by Mr Maze, was to the following effect. She stated that she had for many years resided in Rising-cum-Lark, where she kept an establishment for the education of the daughters of noblemen and gentlemen, whom she trained on the great principle, that sound views were not incompatible with a graceful carriage of the head. That, in pursuance of her scheme of instruction, it was her custom to take her pupils to view the works of nature; and, in humble imitation of the tutors respectively mentioned in Mrs Barbauld's works and Joyce's *Scientific Dialogues*, to shew how the ear of wheat sprang from a root, how the yellow primrose, which, to Peter Bell, was merely a yellow primrose, and nothing more, suggested to the studious observer the thought that it grew out of the ground, and how the dandelion head (which our ancestors used instead of clocks) reminded the reflective being of the flight of time. That in consequence of the cacoshmia manufactory, she and her pupils had been almost entirely confined to the house with their handkerchiefs held to their noses. That the inhalation of a noxious atmosphere

was calculated to deprave the taste, to distract the attention, to deteriorate the principles, to demoralise the heart, and to distort the features. That the cacoshmia produced an eminently noxious atmosphere. That an 'inner life,' which, in accordance with the sentiments of modern literature, she had taken great pains to acquire, was a possession which depended greatly on the state of the health, and that people could not be expected to have 'inner lives' who suffered from a constant sensation of nausea. That she wondered how the Lord Chancellor would like it himself. That, as a curious exemplification of the effects of the cacoshmia on the animal world, she wished to mention that her cat, from a feeling of despair, with which she herself sympathised, had discontinued the habit of personal ablation, and in respect of cleanliness had become a mediæval saint. That her sources of information with regard to the facts, circumstances, and things thereinbefore deposed to in that her affidavit, were her nose, a gulping feeling in her throat, and a sorrowing heart.

Generally speaking, it was observable that the women desired to introduce extraneous matter into their testimony. In particular, Mrs Billinge, who kept the post-office, could hardly be restrained from making her affidavit a vehicle for acquainting 'His Reverence the Lord Chanceryship' with some obscure conduct of one Mrs Simmons in reference to a wash-tub. Mrs Grigson, widow and general dealer, desired to swear that she had 'always paid her way'; and when reminded of the irrelevancy of this fact, she retorted with sarcastic triumph: 'No matter for that; I'll stick to it.' Some mean folks combined business with pleasure; and old Mrs Dolly Tubb made it a condition of her evidence that she should first obtain gratis a legal opinion whether her neighbour was justified in keeping a pup 'which rent the heavens.' The landlord of the *Pig's Head* alone escaped the prevalent epidemic; so alarmed was he at the bare idea of giving evidence, that when a lawyer's clerk was reported in the village, he took to his bed in company with a warming-pan and a treacle posset, and relieved his mind with a gentle perspiration.

Even when pruned by the lawyers and Mr Maze, the evidence ran to an enormous length. But its effect may be stated in a few words. The partisans of Mr Gotobed swore that every illness and every calamity, public or private, was directly or indirectly due to the cacoshmia; that every adjective in the dictionary which could be used as an epithet of a bad smell, could and should be used as an epithet of the cacoshmia; that every metaphor and simile that the imagination could conceive as being applicable to a bad smell was a *fortiori* applicable to the cacoshmia; that the smoke was infinitely worse than the cacoshmia itself; and that, in support of their opinion, they were all as ill as they could be, and intended to get worse. On the other hand, the party of Mr Blithers urged that the cacoshmia had no smell at all; that it had very little smell; that the little it had was rather balmy and refreshing; and that for the better proof of their statements, they might mention that their health was ridiculously good.

At length, the evidence on both sides was completed. The cause was ready for hearing. The excitement of Rising-cum-Lark rose to a climax. Miss Anastasia Tomkins ordered a dozen of a cooling medicine. The sample boy took to

gambling, and wagered on the result of the trial a tame snake and a copy of Colenso's *Arithmetic* (which did not belong to him) against three halfpence and a stuffed badger.

CHAPTER VI.

The Court of Chancery is not exactly the place wherein to rejoice and make merry. Though it is no longer the abode of delay, chicanery, and fog, that Dickens described in *Bleak House*, and though at the present day it is even somewhat bustling, brisk, and businesslike, yet the hardiest joker could scarce get any amusement therefrom. For if, perchance, a belated joke strays within those precincts, the poor thing assumes, out of respect to the company, so technical and professional an air, that the law-students listen to it with fear, and grow melancholy as they reflect how gray and red-faced they will have become when such wit shall tickle them. The reason of this dullness is not far to seek. In the Court of Chancery there is little of that piquant examination of witnesses which forms so pleasant a feature of common-law actions. No Chancery barrister sheds tears to soften the hearts of a jury; he blows not his nose in order to awaken the sympathy of female spectators. There are none of those impassioned appeals to 'men, husbands, and fathers,' which are the just pride of the courts at Westminster. The most fervent orator in Lincoln's Inn never calls upon a vice-chancellor to remember that he is 'a free-born Briton;' the most florid rhetorician never adjures a lord-justice to 'pause and think on his wife and little ones at home.' Wanting these graces in its procedure, the Court of Chancery is certainly dull.

On the morning when the great suit of *Gotobed v. Blithers* was to be tried, the court of Vice-chancellor Sir Daniell Story presented its wonted appearance. In that court, no traces appeared of the wild excitement which on the same day filled the distant village of Rising-cum-Lark. The only spectator in court was a feeble old man, who sat there in the winter to get warmth, and in the summer because he had nothing else to do. The counsel engaged in the cause were spreading out their papers, wiping their spectacles, settling their wigs, and arranging their hands so that the strings should not be shewn behind their necks. Half-a-dozen shorthand writers were sharpening their pencils, and getting their note-books ready. In the red baize well fronting the bar sat Mr Gotobed, nervously twitching his white fingers; and near him Mr Blithers smiled with a sickly sweetness on all around. By the side of his client, Mr Moon, senior, reposing in the serenity of plumpness, hinted the whole of law and equity by the tranquil convolutions of his thumbs. Maps and plans of the cacoshmia works and the Gotobed estate were scattered here and there, and a quart bottle of the cacoshmia stood on the table for the judge to smell. At length the vice-chancellor entered the court. The usher, who was possessed of a feebly comic mind concealed under a majestic frown, cried 'Silence!' in a loud voice, giggled secretly at his own temerity, caught himself in the act, and composed his face into the likeness of an india-rubber Punch squeezed flat. The vice-chancellor bowed to the bar, and scratched his nose with a pen. The cause began.

The senior counsel for the plaintiff was the eminent Mr Dædalus, Q.C. Of this great man's speech it will be sufficient to say that he unfolded, with masterly eloquence, all the story of Mr Gotobed's wrongs. He spoke for the whole day, and in the intervals of his harangue consumed an ounce of cough lozenges and a large jugful of spring-water. Mr Gotobed listened with rapt attention, and Mr Blithers fell asleep. The only incident in the first day's proceedings worth notice was, that the judge smelled incautiously at the cacosmia, which proved so strong, that for the rest of the sitting, the usher feared to move a muscle, lest, if his face once relaxed, he might never be able to frown again.

The next day Mr Maze began. As Mr Maze was the inventor of a style of eloquence which is much admired and imitated by his legal friends, and also by many popular preachers, it may be as well to give a brief outline of his speech.

'I appear yronour,' he said, 'with mlearned friend for the plaintiff. After the exhaustive speech of mlearned friend, I shall not find it necessary, as it would be most presumptuous in me, to detain yronour many minutes.' Here the judge, who knew Mr Maze well, abstracted his mind altogether from the question before the court, and fixed it on the consideration of a new carpet for his back drawing-room. 'I think, yronour, I need hardly read to yronour any of the numerous letters which have passed between the parties to this suit.'—He reads them all.—'Nor need I comment on them.'—He comments on them.—'It is not my intention to trouble yronour with much of the evidence which has been filed.'—He troubles him with every word.—'Nor need I dwell on the law of the subject.'—He dwells on it.—'I shall not take up the time of the court by quoting any cases.'—He quotes fifteen at full length.—'And now, yronour, I have done.'—He has not done.—'I shall not add another word.'—He speaks for another hour and a half.

The thoughtful mind will easily perceive that this style of speaking has great merits; it keeps the unwary hearer in breathless expectation of the speaker's leaving off, and thus compels him to listen to every word.

But while the cause was slowly meandering through the court at Lincoln's Inn, where not a soul cared what the decision might be, except so far as it added another precedent to the Law Reports; and while, under the influence of Mr Maze's speech, the learned judge's face became more and more vacant, and at last settled into an aspect so sullen and so devoid of expression, that it only wanted a cherry-stick tube screwed into the back of his head to look like a carved pipe in a tobaccoist's window; and while the usher fell into a dream, and wished that Mr Maze were a steam-boiler with a defective plate, and might blow up; and while the barristers' boys relieved the weariness of the spirit with pinches of the flesh—Rising-cum-lark was raging with a tumult such as never before was known in its history.

The first two days of the trial, Rising-cum-Lark quivered and palpitated in a manner that boded no good. No business was done except at the cacosmia works. The labourers and farmers stood in threatening groups here and there along the village street, and the rustic quidnuncs dwelt, for the time being, in a paradise of surmises. The

national school was open indeed, but the children did as they liked; and when the sample boy tried to earn a world-wide reputation by learning Euclid, even at such a crisis—as Archimedes studied geometry during the storming of Syracuse—he found no one to notice him, and relapsed into a human being. But on the third day there came a letter from Mr Gotobed, saying that the judge's decision might be expected that evening. Then the storm broke out.

The day began badly by the whole male population adjourning to the *Pig's Head*. The house was full to the very garrets. Mr Barry O'Looney threw off for the time his professional character, and constituted himself chairman of the smoke-room. There, surrounded by an admiring throng, he expatiated on the merits of whisky, as being conducive to clearness of the head when taken immediately after breakfast; he dilated on the glory of his ancestors, who might have been kings of Donegal, but scorned the action, being a much older race than the last royal family of that country; he enlarged on the excellences of a little mare belonging to Mr Thady Flynn of Ballyporthen; and he handed round his father's shillelagh, to shew the marks on it where the weapon had been injured by the bridges of noses. When he had spent the morning in this fashion, Mr Barry O'Looney sallied forth to see his patients with a very determined countenance, and a kind of feeling that he was lifting his feet very high from the ground without being able to help it. He had also forgotten his hat, and carried under his arm the landlady's tea-caddy, which he believed was a case of instruments.

Outside the *Pig's Head*, there was no less commotion. Mrs Gotobed had despatched a groom on horseback to the nearest station to await the telegram which her husband had promised to send. Till the man returned, she and her daughter sat, like geysers at rest, in quiet potentiality of eruption. The little old gentleman with one arm never rested from early morning, but called on all his neighbours, and comforted them with his ferocity. Miss Anastasia Tomkins remained in her drawing-room silent and motionless. Some smelling-salts, a bottle of sal-volatile, a decanter of brandy, a tumbler of water, some spirits of camphor, some Eau-de-Cologne, a basin, and a sponge were arranged on the table before her. The sofa cushions were placed on the hearth-rug; a pen-knife, wherewith to cut her stay-laces, lay near at hand. Miss Tomkins was prepared for the worst.

The afternoon wore away, and still no news came. Mr Barry O'Looney, who had gone to bed in his boots about one o'clock, with a vague impression that the sooner it was midnight the better it would be for the world in general, woke up refreshed, and again joined the crowd at the *Pig's Head*. His father's shillelagh was in his hand. As he approached the group which stood at the door of the public-house, the throng of Mr Blithers' hands, returning from their work, came up the lane. At their head, walked Mr Samuel Bubb, with a green cotton umbrella under his arm; bringing up the rear, marched Hairy Abraham, who carried his supper in a basin, tied up with a red handkerchief. The farmers and agricultural labourers who loitered about the *Pig's Head* were all filled with drink, and mad with excitement. Mr Blithers' hands were no less

excited, and were, moreover, enraged at the prospect of losing their employment. It was hardly probable that a collision could be avoided. But Mr Barry O'Looney soon put the matter beyond a doubt. No sooner did he perceive the opposite party drawing near, than he uttered a frightful whoop, and rushed straight at Mr Samuel Bubb. In an instant, all the pent-up passions that had been gathering force for months found vent. There was no pause, no premeditation; the combatants sprang to the fight without a moment's warning, but, like the Homeric heroes, each made a short speech as he mixed in the fray. 'Come on, lads,' cried Farmer Jones, throwing away his pipe; 'there's some chaps yond as wanten their yeds shavin' wi' a knobstick.'—'Them as comes across me,' said Hairy Abraham, 'ull geet summut as they dunna wanten.'—'Erin go bragh!' shouted Mr Barry O'Looney, bringing down his shillelagh on the hat of Mr Samuel Bubb.—'Make less nise,' retorted Mr Bubb, poking the handle of his umbrella into his antagonist's eye. Dire was the battle, and terrible were the blows. All the women screamed; all the boys hurrahed; all the dogs barked; the military old gentleman with one arm hid himself under his bed; and Miss Janet Parkins' cat, who expected her confinement, was locked in the wardrobe, and sustained with cream. The landlord of the *Pig's Head* took refuge in the beer-cellar; but his wife, made of sterner stuff, did good service with a salamander. The sample boy lay in ambush behind a hedge, and harassed the enemy with stones.

When the struggle was at its height, the faint echo of a cheer was heard from a distance. As if spell-bound, the combatants stopped their fight, and every eye was turned in the direction whence came the sounds. And then the ringing hoofs of a horse ridden at full speed were heard coming up the lane. Soon the eager crowd saw Mr Gotobed's groom spurring his panting horse, and waving frantically over his head a telegraphic despatch. As he approached, the people parted to let him through; and as he passed at a wild gallop, he shouted: 'We've won!' No sooner were the words heard than Mr Barry O'Looney mounted on the village pump. His coat was slit up the back; he was covered with mud; the bosom of his shirt was decorated with the supper of Hairy Abraham and the shattered fragments of the basin which had held it; his eyes were almost swollen up; a stream of blood issued from his nose; and his hand clutched with a desperate grasp the torn and ragged moiety of one of Mr Bubb's trouser-legs. But thinking, with Petruchio, that 'honour peereth through the meanest habit,' he cared for nothing as he led off the cheers. Never was such a cheer heard. The mighty volume of sound rolled up the village street; and young and old, rich and poor, took it up. Like the courier fire which flashed from Ida along the beacon-flaring headlands to the Arachnean height, and brought to the wife of Agamemnon the tidings of Troy's capture, so sped the hurrah of Mr Barry O'Looney through the lanes and by-ways of Rising-cum-Lark. It reached the rectory, and the rector sang the first verse of *Three Jolly Post-boys* before he remembered his cravat. It reached the doctor's house, and the doctor choked himself in the endeavour to clear his throat with the suitable expression. It reached the house of the military old gentleman with one arm, who

came from under his bed, and twisting his moustache up to his eyes, defied creation. It reached the trellised cottage where Miss Janet Parkins dwelt, and the old lady, with much promptitude, unscrewed her cork-leg, and threw it away, lest she might haply be tempted to dance. It reached the bed-chamber of Mrs Wobbletop, the triumphantly aged female of the village, who woke up from a kind of snorting reverie of some ten years' duration, and inquired with much anxiety whether 'the French were come.' It reached the establishment of Miss Anastasia Tomkins, who fell on the neck of the county member's niece, and murmured in a convulsed voice: 'A whole holiday to-morrow, and all the verbs regular till the end of the quarter.' It reached the ear of the sample boy, who begged a shilling from the rector to purchase materials for a bonfire, and, putting the coin in his pocket, made a splendid pile of firewood by pulling down the rector's garden-fence.

The news brought by the groom was true. At the close of the third day's hearing, the vice-chancellor gave judgment entirely in favour of Mr Gotobed. Mr Blithers was restrained by the injunction of the Court of Chancery from allowing smoke or other noxious vapours to issue from his chimney. This, of course, was tantamount to a total stoppage of the works. Mr Blithers was also condemned to pay the costs of the suit.

The victory was decisive. Mr Blithers, indeed, talked of appealing, but law and fact were evidently against him, and his own counsel advised that further proceedings were hopeless. Messrs Moon and Son and Messrs Tangle and Twist at once began to prepare their respective bills of costs. But when these formidable documents were nearly ready, Mr Blithers became bankrupt. The lawyers were at first astounded, and then disgusted when it became known that the bankrupt had absolutely no assets. Every item of property that Mr Blithers possessed had been mortgaged to Mr Samuel Bubb. The transaction looked so suspicious, that every effort was made to find a flaw in it, but in vain. The Bankruptcy Act of 1869 had not then been passed; and Mr Blithers obtained his discharge without paying a penny of his debts. Shortly afterwards, he set up again in business with Mr Bubb as his partner, and recommenced the manufacture of cacosmia in a neighbouring town, where the inhabitants were accustomed to bad smells, and welcomed the cacosmia as an agreeable change. There the firm of Bubb and Blithers flourished exceedingly. On the other hand, Mr Gotobed, though he had gained the victory, was a poor man to the end of his days, in consequence of the enormous costs which he was compelled to pay through Mr Blithers' bankruptcy.

Rising-cum-Lark meanwhile subsided into its primitive state of calm repose, till a few years later it was again roused to a delirium of excitement. The awful event, which, as the landlord of the *Pig's Head* remarked, 'came like a thunder-bolt slap into his ear,' and which, for a second time, convulsed the distracted village, needs no detailed description to unveil its horrors. A single subject and a single predicate form the simple but melancholy proposition. Miss Anastasia Tomkins married Mr Nathaniel Blithers!

Since the announcement of this marriage, Rising-

cum-Lark has lost all faith in human nature. A few optimists, indeed, cherished a lingering belief in the sample boy; but he, growing up to man's estate, fell into evil company, and gradually sinking from bad to worse, became a confirmed advocate of woman's rights. From that time, though the rabbit burrows in the deserted cacosmia works, and the swallow builds her nest in the ruined chimney, Rising-cum-Lark has regarded the world with a sardonic smile.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

ALMOST bewildering is the number of topics claiming to be scientific which for some weeks past have been talked about—owing, on the one hand, to the fact that great numbers of people in this country have nothing else to do than to ventilate their good intentions; on the other, to the appearance of science in many guises—social, economical, moral, ethnological, financial, and physical. But we should do well to guard ourselves, and remember that much of the so-called science of the present day is only art, and that some of it is artful. Amid all this endeavour, one intention is especially manifest—namely, the well-being of the greatest number. In the new scheme of education, every child in the kingdom is to be taught; not one is to be left out: hours of work are to be shortened, and better dwellings than those now existing are to be built. A praiseworthy stand is being made against the scandalous encroachments which bar Londoners out of so large a part of Epping Forest; and the allies of the International Exhibition, while telling us that more than a million visitors went to see it, announce for next year a series of concerts, to be set forth on such a scale of magnificence as was never before witnessed in England.—In Edinburgh, the lady students of anatomy have carried their point, and are to have access to the university as well as the men.—The Ladies' College at Hitchin has proved so successful, that it is to be transferred to the neighbourhood of Cambridge for the advantage of lectures.—And, as an evidence that something more than 'grammar' is in future to be taught in our public schools, the Royal Society have been called on by act of parliament to elect seven members—one to each of the governing bodies. The names of the gentlemen chosen for this honourable office are: Professor P. M. Duncan, Sir James Paget, Rev. Professor Price, Professor Stephen Smith, Mr W. Spottiswoode (Treasurer of the Royal Society), Professor G. G. Stokes, and Dr Tyndall. Better advocates of science, in the highest sense of the term, could not be found.

Amid all this, Lord Derby has been telling the working-men of Lancashire not to expect too much, even from education. He points out that where all are educated, no one will earn better wages than another merely by reason of education. The obvious moral is, that they will be the happiest who love knowledge for its own sake—who take more delight in high pursuits and elevated thoughts than in the market value of their acquirements. We need hardly remind our readers that this is a truth which has been inculcated over and over again in this *Journal*.

The fact that a number of distinguished

scientific men should undertake the long voyage to Ceylon and India to observe an eclipse is a proof (if proof be wanted) that science is as cheerfully cultivated in its higher conditions as in its lower, where it merges into the arts. Further knowledge of the constitution of the sun is required; and this, it is thought, may be gained by means of the spectroscope and polariscope supplementing the far-seeing powers of the telescope, and with photography at hand to record the phenomena; and competent observers offer themselves for the service. It is to be hoped that they will be favoured with clear skies; and that in this particular the eclipse of December 1871 will be more fruitful of scientific results than was that of December 1870.

In continuing his interesting communication to the Scottish Meteorological Society on the Rainfall of Scotland, Mr Buchan particularises the differences between one side of the island and the other. Near the foot of Loch Lomond, the annual fall is fifty-three inches; and at Ardlui, near the head, it is one hundred and fifteen inches. On the west coast, from Mull to Skye, the fall varies from sixty-three to eighty-eight inches; but at Gligachan, in Skye, the quantity is one hundred and forty-eight inches. This seems prodigious, and is what might be expected in the tropics rather than in the latitude of North Britain.

Turning now to the east coast, it is shewn that the valleys of the Dee and Don in Aberdeenshire are remarkable for a comparatively uniform distribution of rainfall. The lowest amount, twenty-nine inches, is at Aberdeen; the highest, from thirty-five to thirty-six inches, in the neighbourhood of Ballater. On this, Mr Buchan remarks: 'The comparatively small rainfall of Upper Dee and Don arises, no doubt, from the broad extent of mountain ranges lying to the south-west, in crossing which the south-west winds are deprived of much of their moisture.' And it will interest people who are at a loss where to go for invigoration to be told 'that the summer climate of these districts is the driest and most bracing in the British Isles, and that grain is successfully cultivated up to the height of sixteen hundred feet above the sea, which is four hundred or five hundred feet higher than at any other place in North Britain.'

Dr Andrews, Vice-President of Queen's College, Belfast, has proved by experiment that there is a continuity between the gaseous and liquid states of matter; by which is to be understood that between the gas proper and the liquid proper there are conditions into which they pass, sometimes naturally, sometimes mechanically, which completely connect the two extremes. 'The liquid state of matter is said to form a link between the gaseous and the solid; but the continuity between the solid and the liquid has not yet been discovered. The discovery would be difficult, but its importance in physical science is such that we may look forward to its being attempted if not accomplished. Dr Andrews' experiments on gases were made in glass tubes in which he could see the results; but glass would be too weak for use in researches as to the continuity of the liquid and solid states. It would be necessary, as he remarks, 'to obtain by the combined action of heat and pressure, the solid and liquid of the same density and the like physical properties. To accomplish this result would require pressures far beyond any which can